THE

RAGGED SCHOOL UNION Magazine.

JANUARY, 1849.

Introduction.

THE commencement of a Magazine, as a medium of awakening or sustaining interest in a work of widely-extended philanthropy, is generally supposed to indicate that the judgment of the national mind has been pretty clearly expressed on the expediency of the work itself. We do not expect to see a periodical started to *make* an institution great, but because the public, having decided that it *is* great, more extensively diffused information upon its results and benefits may reasonably be expected to make it greater.

On this assumed pre-requisite for a new periodical, we hold that a case is made out for our present undertaking. We feel that we hazard nothing, and take for granted nothing, when we claim for the institution of Ragged Schools the rank of a *recognized social movement*. Their past and their present are a *great fact*. In spite of difficulties beyond those which commonly frown upon the early labours of the Christian patriot, the work lives on, and is gathering strength daily; leaving the timid to wonder at the dissipation of their own fears, and teaching objectors to be cautious, how they conspire for the overthrow of a work which, haply, may be of God.

And what was the condition of things which originated this great thought, giving those who were possessed by it no rest till it had taken the name and form of action? Why, the spectacle, in many parts of the metropolis, as well as in our large towns, of masses of idle children, having few to care for their bodies, and "no man to care for their souls." For the most part these are "a seed of evil-doers' children that are corrupters;"—in person filthy; in garments tattered; in habits squalid; subsisting chiefly on the wages of vice, and schooled only in the lessons of crime. They

dwell commonly in some definite, little known, and generally avoided locality. The district visitor does not enter their courts, knowing that she would receive only insults and rudeness for her tracts. The laborious minister does not visit them, because, congregated as they generally are, in the heart of our over-crowded parishes, he finds enough, and more than enough, for all his pastoral exertions, in the abodes of honest poverty, and in the chambers of the sick and dying.

It is manifest, therefore, that if any good is to be done, a *new agency*, definite in its aim, and specific in its character, must be brought to bear upon this spreading evil. It could be done in no other way. There is no such elasticity in our moral nature, as that vice should work its own cure, or lift itself from the pit of its own degradation. For all intellectual, social, or moral improvement, man is to depend on man. This is the law of the present economy. If we forget this law, or if we break it, we must be content to make our moral evils of longer life; he that is in darkness will be in darkness still, and "he that is filthy will be filthy still."

Acting on this conviction, men, strong in faith, commenced the establishment of RAGGED SCHOOLS. With what success—by what instrumentality—on what principles and plan of operation—it will be the design of the present publication to develope. And we may therefore say, generally, that the contents of our future pages will admit of some such classification as the following:—I. What HAS been done. II. What IS at the present doing. III. What MAY be done; and IV. What there still REMAINS to do.

I. WHAT HAS BEEN DONE.—The originators of Ragged Schools had to "walk by faith;" those who come after them may almost "walk by sight." They will see, in our Magazine, by what means the mountain has often become a plain, and difficulties, of the sternest and most appalling front, have retired before undiscouraged faith, affectionate zeal, quiet trust, and "patient continuance in well-doing." Our publication will be expressly an organ of *results*—a medium through which our various schools may make known their progress, as well for the information of the public, as for the encouragement of less successful labourers.

II. WHAT IS ACTUALLY DOING.—The work we are engaged in is "not done in a corner," and yet many are as ignorant of it as if it were. The opening of a new school excites no sensation, and

public meetings they never attend. But they will read a brief periodical; and, as a record of the more interesting features of our public meetings, and of the proceedings of local associations, it is hoped that our Magazine will not be without its interest.

III. WHAT MAY BE DONE.—Successful as our schools have been, they are yet comparatively unknown. The nature of the agency has never been formally submitted to the public *in detail;* and, in many parts of the country, it is known only as a beautiful result. Hence the frequent applications our Committee receive for information and advice. There are numbers, both among clergy and laity, who admire, approve, and wish to imitate the example of our schools, but they know not how to *begin.* Our pages it is hoped will supply this desideratum. They will be thrown open to all inquirers; and "line upon line," and rule upon rule, will be laid down for their guidance, as the exigencies of the case may require.

IV. And, lastly, our Magazine will point out WHAT REMAINS TO BE DONE. With a painful but yet necessary industry, we shall try to bring together such statistics of ignorance, destitution, and crime, in our juvenile population, as shall arouse all the better sympathies of our nature to life and action. We shall show the baneful influence these things must have upon our national and social character; calling upon ALL, whether as citizens concerned for the moral atmosphere of their neighbourhood—as masters interested in the fidelity and intelligence of their servants—as parents dreading the far-reaching influence of vicious example—or as Christians anxious to preserve the young from vice, the poor from crime, their country from shame, and souls from everlasting ruin, to aid us in a work which the wise and good have approved, and which a gracious God has blessed.

Such is a brief exposition of our views in sending forth the present publication. It is begun, we trust, in the same spirit of faith, and love, and patient waiting, as was the great work whose objects it is designed to advance. But of that work it is but the humble handmaid. This may die, but that must flourish. This may be a thing of accidents, but in that are the elements of perpetuity. No; for the institution whose agents we are, we entertain no fear. Its indestructibility is in itself; seeing it has truth for its foundation, love for its instrumentality, the Bible for its rule of action, and the glory of God for its end.

Original Papers.

THE RAGGED SCHOOL UNION:

ITS OBJECTS AND CLAIMS.

If we could prevail on those whom we now address, to accompany us in our walks and visitations among the densely crowded alleys of this vast metropolis, to witness, with their own eyes, the destitution, ignorance, filthiness, and sin, in which so large a portion of our fellow-citizens are grovelling—to test, by every one of their senses, the character and results of the moral and sanitary condition of these forgotten thousands, we should have no difficulty in convincing the most obstinate of the duty and necessity of some vigorous and immediate efforts.

If, after such a perambulation, we could further prevail to conduct them to the schools in connexion with the Central Society, termed the "Ragged School Union," and especially to the school lately founded in Westminster, for the daily education and maintenance of children left in the most forlorn and perilous condition—perilous, we mean, in respect of the gallows or transports which stand before them—we should be equally successful in satisfactorily establishing the reality and value of the system we have adopted.

It is, however, much to be lamented, that so few will form their own judgment from personal inspection. They trust to the oral or written narratives of others, which must ever fall short of the disgusting truth; or they stifle their sympathies by believing, or assuming, that the pictures are overcharged. But, whatever the cause, the consequence is equally fatal to the miserable objects of our care, and equally discouraging to those who labour in the cheerless vineyard. The once awakened charity is not sustained—the source of the bounty, at no time very abundant, seems to be dried up—while the children, refreshed by this scanty rill, and already blossoming with the promises of fruit, will be sent back to that furnace of wickedness, from which they have been lately snatched with so much anxiety and toil.

The fact is, that the contributions we have received have been altogether insufficient for the purpose we have in view. We have not collected, from the many hundreds of rich or easy persons to whom we have made application, a sum equal to that required for the training of a

small fraction of the juvenile misery of Westminster. The great bulk of our fund for that locality was given by one lady, in three amounts, one of two hundred, another of three hundred, and a third of five hundred pounds; it is by this liberality alone that we have been enabled to continue our operations in Westminster; and it will be on the failure of this munificence, (a repetition of which we cannot expect,) or of the public favour that might make compensation for it, that we shall be compelled to drive the children from the school, and close the doors of the much needed asylum.

The conductors of the movement have, doubtless, entertained very sanguine hopes that the exposure of the festering mischief, and the ample proof of the effective character of the remedy, would have prompted a general and earnest endeavour to assist their labours. They have met, it is true, with much sympathy in language—crowded assemblies at the foundation, or the anniversaries of schools, have attested at least the desire to hear something about the matter; and those who have examined the present condition of the children, and contrasted it with their former state, have expressed unqualified approbation. The evil, nevertheless, is as gigantic as before; and the admiring parties, neither by themselves, nor by calling in the aid of others, contribute anything to abate the monster mischief.

We scarcely think it necessary to dwell on the urgency of these claims, to exhibit the plague and its inevitable consequences, and the duties demanded of us all by every law of justice and humanity. If the public sympathy has not been roused by the daily contemplation of crime and suffering, our appeal would, perhaps, be weak in stirring it to activity. But we hope that the feeling is alive, and that no more is required than to point out a channel in which it may safely and beneficially flow.

It cannot fail to be alive in the hearts of any who may read the column of police intelligence in the papers of each morning. The courts are really oppressed by the numbers of juvenile delinquents, while the magistrates are at their wits' end to devise punishments for each offence, balancing between the youth of the offender, and the peril, both to the child itself and the dignity of the law, of allowing the offender to go "scot-free." Some time ago, a disclosure was made before one of the courts, of a foul and wicked establishment, in Brick Lane, where a notorious Fagin kept a lodging-house for boys, and daily dispatched them, with all the authority and precision of a general officer, to their assigned task of fraud or violence. Now this may be taken as a fact representative of many others; there are scores of such nests of infamy, in which crime of every kind is hatched. No law could reach these dens of iniquity; they are not, nor could they be

made, illegal in themselves, for it is not the aggregation of human beings that can be forbidden. Neither could the law prevent the contaminating influence from the aggregation of such persons—it is an earlier and higher source that must be drawn upon for the correction we desire.

But the police reports, and even the police statistics, which exhibit much that is never brought under the cognizance of the public press, give but a faint outline of the general disorder. To ascertain the whole truth, to estimate the magnitude of the evil, we must penetrate into the very recesses of the predatory tribes, and hear the incessant complaints of turbulence, great and small thefts, insolence, and idleness, from those in whom there is still left some slight perception of the distinction between right and wrong. The visitor will return to his home astonished, far less by the amount than by the paucity of crime recorded in the newspapers—he will certainly cease to wonder that pauperism is so rife, and will see in a growing population a growing development of peril and suffering.

Any schools, though open only for a few nights in the week, would apply a slight medicament of the balm of Gilead to these festering wounds. Let us suppose that one per cent. of those who attend them would receive a real and lasting benefit; the result, surely, is worth the cost. If open for every evening they would, proportionately, bear fruits; if open during the whole and every day, they would produce the amplest results of which the condition of the people is at present susceptible. We may rest our assertion on general principles—we may rest it on the experience of others—we may rest it, as we do, especially on our own. It will not be out of place to quote here the testimony of a notorious thief, a resident practitioner in the neighbourhood of our Industrial School. He came to inspect the buildings, and learn the "curriculum of study" proposed for the children; he heard it; and, expressing his approbation, added his intention to become an annual subscriber to the amount of one guinea! "What," said the City Missionary, "is the meaning of this? You know that these schools are established to counteract such practices as yours."—"Ah!" replied the man, with an altered tone and countenance, "if such things had existed when I was a boy, I should not have come to my present disgraceful condition." Here is one, among many, of the instances we could produce in attestation of the utility of these humble institutions; were there any further doubt on the subject, we might remove it by citing the willingness, nay, the burning desire, the children exhibit to enter the school, and embrace the discipline. Many wish to avoid the wandering and precarious life; and a few are sincerely anxious for higher things.

We do not shut our eyes to the greatness of the undertaking, nor delude ourselves as to the difficulties that we must necessarily encounter. We see it all; and we are, nevertheless, very sanguine that much evil may be effectually removed, and the remainder considerably abated. The numbers, in the first place, of the really ragged classes, have been somewhat overstated;* thirty thousand, perhaps, might be the safe estimate. Now, from these, a farther deduction must be made before we arrive at the amount of what may be regarded as the body of hopeless ignorance and pauperism; for it is very remarkable, and almost incredible, except to those who have personally inquired, how much money is obtained and misspent in various ways by these dexterous urchins. This may be proved by the success of the Clothing Fund, Book Fund, and other funds, opened in the most destitute schools, where a right direction has been given, by the care of the teachers, to accumulation and expenditure.

But we are sanguine on the supposition only that means will be found to give these wretched children a fair opportunity of breaking off their evil habits, and acquiring new ones. Such an experiment, however, cannot be satisfactorily tried if we go no further than the evening school, to be opened for three hours, from six to nine o'clock. This arrangement is a kind of Penelopic web; the work is done and undone again with painful certainty and precision; and the children, having acquired a small treasure of thrift, cleanliness, and morality, return to their vicious relatives and companions, to be plundered, as it were, of their scanty stock of virtue. That a different issue is very possible, may be proved by the admirable efforts of Sheriff Watson, at Aberdeen; the wisdom and humanity of his plan have been tested by their results; vagrancy is extinguished; and the eye and the heart are no longer distressed by the daily exhibition of vice and suffering.

The circumstances of that town were, no doubt, far more favourable than those of London to the success of such establishments. We could, however, in our proportion and degree, attain very similar results from similar principles. The children must be withdrawn from their daily occupations; but, as their daily occupations are, in truth, their daily sustenance, we must devise some means of rendering this change of life not only pleasant, but *possible*. A moderate quantity of food, therefore, will be required, of so limited and simple a character as to offer no inducement to the mere glutton, but enough to keep them in health for

* Although the number of children in London, who are growing up uneducated, may be stated (as in our first Annual Report) as exceeding 100,000, yet the really ragged, destitute, forlorn class, probably do not exceed one-third of the above number.

the prosecution of their studies. Half our efforts are thrown away when expended on a feeble and famished race of children. What can be expected from the diligence or capacity of scholars who have not tasted food during the day, and many of whom have been seen to faint from mere exhaustion?

We entreat all persons very seriously to consult how small a sum will be adequate to effect a very great good. Seven pounds a year for each child will nearly supply every possible requisite. Let us suppose that thirty thousand is the number of those who, in London alone, demand this special assistance; a sum, then, of two hundred and ten thousand pounds *a year*—a sum that would barely cover the national expenses for crime in *two months*, would go far to balk the jailor of his prey, and turn the jails themselves into school-houses or factories.

Many people run away with the notion that so degraded a class is beyond the reach of reformation or influence. Now, strange as the assertion may appear, we at once affirm that we entertain more hopes of fruit from the miserable than from the easier ranks; of that fruit, we mean, which is seen in the development and nurture of the feelings of the heart. Our difficulty does not lie in eliciting the affections of these neglected children, but the finding fit employment for the qualities we impart. Those born and placed in safer circumstances may withstand the temptations to which the pupil of the Ragged School might eventually yield; but, for the mere detail of teaching, we prefer the wild to the demurer class.

Oppression and sorrow have, of themselves, taught to many submission and endurance. It may be seen in several incidents, trivial, perhaps, in their nature, but illustrative of their habits of mind. "You must wait," said the missionary to a boy at one of those tea-parties, where, once in twelve months, the appetites of these novices learn what it is to approximate to a full meal—"you must wait, and then you shall be fed." "Oh, I can wait," said the boy, his teeth actually chattering with hunger, "I am more accustomed to that than to the other!" Nor has suffering failed in its frequent, though not invariable result, an interchange of sympathy. We saw a gratifying instance in the school at Broadwall. One boy, of the most lawless life and insolent behaviour, was, after repeated expulsions, considered incorrigible. He was sentenced, therefore, to be finally dismissed. His circumstances, no doubt, were very deplorable; and much, it is true, could be said in extenuation, drawn from the misery and sinful neglect of his earliest and latest years. A public example was, however, necessary. But the six principal boys came, in a body, to the master, and made intercession for one more trial, engaging to use all their influence, and be responsible for his future conduct. The request was granted, and the lad was saved by the efforts

of his ragged companions, who, only a few months before, neither knew nor cared to discern the difference between right and wrong!

The members of the Union are persons of various opinions, and belonging to every class of society and department of industry. They are united, nevertheless, by the single bond of a deep and earnest desire to diffuse the light of the Gospel throughout these wretched classes, and, by that means alone, elevate their social and moral condition. In making an appeal to the public sympathy, they are not impelled by any exclusive spirit, nor do they seek that the task should be confided entirely to their hands. Their object is to make known the evil, to place these unhappy sufferers before the eyes of the country, and rouse it to a sense of duty, and a method of remedy. An effort on the largest scale would, certainly, afford them matter for hearty rejoicing; but they do not disregard the very feeblest endeavours. It is sufficient for them that they seek the welfare of immortal souls, looking to the end, and not to the agents; deeply thankful if they be but the instruments whereby a single child may be brought to the knowledge of redeeming love!

A.

RAGGED SCHOOL MEMORIALS:

THE OLD STABLE.

No. I.

It is upwards of ten years since we first visited the back streets and courts which lie immediately behind Westminster Abbey. Our object was to make known the message of God's mercy and love to the degraded inhabitants of that neighbourhood. After taking a survey of the old brick buildings, some of which seemed nodding to their fall, we entered the wretched dwellings. This, however, required no small degree of moral courage. While passing from house to house and room to room, we found everything in keeping with windows long-since broken, and street-doors wrenched from their hinges. The filthy, dilapidated dwellings sadly harmonized with the ruffianly and besotted aspect of the inhabitants, among whom employment too frequently means crime, and amusement—debauchery and outrage. No one could go within the precincts of such a place, without perceiving that he had entered into a colony of thieves and pickpockets. Under the shadow of St. Stephens, the seat of British *Legislation*, were these masses of the human family to be found, who knew no religion, and literally owned no laws. At the doors and windows of the houses, and also at the ends of narrow

courts, were seen loitering, groups of half-dressed men and women, smoking, swearing, and occasionally fighting. The swarms of filthy, neglected children, squatted in the mud, were screaming forth language as profane and obscene as that of their elders. These were being trained, as their fathers and mothers had been before them, in that system of education of which Newgate and Botany Bay are the almost inevitable results.

One fine Sabbath afternoon, in the month of April, when the streets were unusually crowded, after having provided a large room, we went forth in company with a poor tinker, (the only person in the neighbourhood who would render us any assistance,) to gather together these poor neglected and outcast children of the streets.

After no small effort, forty were taken to the room, all of whom looked as wild as the deer taken from the mountain, and penned up within the hurdles, when approached by men ; the matted hair, the mud-covered face, hands, and feet, the ragged and tattered clothes, that served as an apology to cover their nakedness, gave the group a very grotesque appearance, and would have been a fine subject for the painter's pencil.

Little was done that afternoon besides taking the names, and even in this we had to encounter difficulties. Beginning with the first bench, a boy was asked, " What is your name ? " He answered, " They calls me Billy." " Where do you live ? " " I lives in that yer street down the way, at Mother M—'s rag-shop ; I have a tother brother, but I am older than he." The next boy was ten years of age ; he said his name was Dick. " Any other name besides Dick ? " " No, they calls me Dick ; I sells matches in the streets, and live in that tother street next room to Jimmy that sells oranges." Such is a specimen of the answers given to questions respecting names, age, and residence !

Some interesting stories were told them from the Scriptures, and at the close of the afternoon each child had a small card given him, containing a short prayer. Attached to it was a piece of pink tape, that it might be hung over the mantel-shelf.

This appeared to them more valuable than if it had been gold. Accompanied with the reward was an invitation to come again next Sabbath, which was heartily responded to by each child. Next Sabbath a large addition to our former numbers was congregated at the school-room. The work of teaching was commenced, amid difficulties only known to those who engaged in it, but by patience and perseverance they were eventually overcome. For the first time in the history of these neglected outcasts, they found out that some one loved them ; they had hearts to feel it, and in return they gave their best gifts—regular attendance and orderly attention.

Though the room gave comfortable accommodation to eighty children,

it soon became "too strait." A larger one was sought; and, as a substitute for a better, an *old stable* was taken and fitted up for the purpose.

It was soon found that the children lost much of what they gained on the Sabbath, by having no other employment or amusement but that afforded by vice and crime during the other six days of the week. To remedy this evil, when the old stable was ready, the school was opened every day. It was soon filled to overflowing, for every child was made welcome, however ragged or destitute.—

The first summer's instruction had closed; dark December had arrived, with its cold nipping frosts, which told powerfully on the half-naked bodies and unshod feet of the children. Their ankles and feet were very often chapped and bleeding; yet, suffering as they did, nothing would keep them from the school. Why? Because the teacher was kind, and the hand of kindness was held out by all who met them there.

Our hearts were often grieved to witness them shivering in the cold, and especially as we could render them no assistance, for it was with great difficulty that sufficient funds were raised to carry on the school. We have seen many of the children taken ill and die, through exposure to the inclemency of the weather. Poor James S——! We shall never forget his death-bed scene. Cold settled on his lungs, which ended in rapid consumption. When we first visited him, he was lying in the corner of a cheerless room, on a pallet of dirty straw. The mother provided a chair, the only one in the room, and it was broken. A large deal box stood in the middle of the floor, which served as a table. The mother was both dirty and ragged. James said he was dying, and that he was going to Jesus. He requested us to read the Bible to him, that he might learn more about the Saviour. The next day that we visited the little sufferer we found him much worse. He had a brother and sister, for whose welfare he showed much anxiety. He first said to his brother, "You must pray for a new heart;" and told his sister to go to school, where she would learn about Christ and the way to heaven. Then, fixing his glazed eyes upon his father and mother—for they were both in the room, looking on their dying boy, for the last time—poor James said, with a faltering voice, "Oh! mother, will you give up drinking, and go to chapel, and pray for a new heart; I want to meet you in heaven; do, mother." The mother's heart was full—tears ran down her squalid cheeks. We had often made the same request to her, but our words fell upon her ears like rain-drops on the adamantine rock. But the voice that now spoke broke open the well-springs of her heart; like a voice from the grave, it came from the lips of her own boy, which were soon to be closed in death. The accusations of a guilty conscience added force to the

request of the dying child, for she knew that his disease was the effect of her own neglect, through intemperate habits; and that, through his short and sharp existence, from her he had experienced more of a parent's negligence than a mother's care.

When he had a little recovered—for he was very feeble, and could scarcely articulate—he told his father he would soon leave him, but he was going to his heavenly Father. Looking wistfully at him, he continued, "Will you give up swearing and bad words, father, and read the Bible, and go to a place of worship, and pray to God to give you a new heart, and I shall meet you in heaven?" The father could not answer the child, but stood wiping away the tears with the sleeve of his tattered flannel jacket; but the mother answered for him, and, kissing the child, she said, "He will, James—yes, he will!"

Poor little James knew that Mary, in the next room, who had been his school companion, was very ill of the same complaint. He requested his mother to carry him to see her, for the last time. On seeing the little girl, whom he kissed with much tenderness, he said, that Jesus loved her, and then bade her farewell.

He was brought back, and laid on his pallet of straw, but his work was not yet done. He had a grandmother, who had treated him kindly when in health, but was not then present to hear, from his own lips, his dying counsel, but we were requested to convey to her the following message: "Tell grandmother to give up buying things on Sunday, and read the big Testament you gave her, and go to chapel."

We closed this affecting scene by offering up prayer to God in behalf of the little sufferer. In one short hour afterwards, the Saviour took home to himself this—the first ripe fruit gathered from our labours in the *Old Stable*.

HOW TO EDUCATE.

EDUCATION is not the putting a sharp weapon into a man's hand, but training him to employ for good purposes whatever weapon may come in his way. Let the schoolmaster, when he is abroad, step into the menagerie, and borrow thence the leading principle of his art. We know better how to educate a lion than how to educate a man. Education is to *train a child out of bad habits into good*, and reading or writing are useful or hurtful just as they aid, or hinder, the accomplishment of this end.—*Rev. W. Arnot.*

Poetry.

THE RAGGED SCHOOL.

A SKETCH IN COURT.—BY A BARRISTER.*

HARK! heard ye not that loud and startling shriek?—
From yonder gallery's crowded rows it came;—
'Twas long—'twas fearful—and it seemed to speak
A mother's anguish, at her offspring's shame:
"Left to himself," † to herd with folly's band,
The child *at home* was taught no useful rule,
And no kind Christian took him by the hand,
To guide his footsteps to the "RAGGED SCHOOL."

Had he been there, he might have learned to bend
The knee in prayer—to shun the haunts of crime,
And gain the favour of that heavenly Friend
Who reigns enthron'd above the spheres sublime:—
Such might have been his lot; for grace can change
The heart from folly's sway to wisdom's rule:
But some, perchance, may deem this doctrine strange,
And wondering ask—What is a "RAGGED SCHOOL?"

Neglected youths together brought to meet,
With tattered garments and "unwashen hands,"
Fresh from the mud of river-bank or street,
Rude as the heathen of benighted lands—
These all, in order, taught to go and come,
To prove obedient to their teacher's rule,
Speak when they're told, and, when they're not, be dumb—
This is the picture of a "RAGGED SCHOOL."

Where *noble* hearts, and *honourable* minds,
The lowest depths of infant misery reach—
Where *beauty's* form its purest pleasure finds,
The long-neglected little ones to teach—

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* Author of "The Ragged School Diorama," "The Lamb and Flag," "Come and See," etc., etc.

† Proverbs xxix. 15.

Where *kindness* ever works, and seldom fails,
(E'en though the child be stubborn as a mule)—
Where *patient love* o'er waywardness prevails—
There go, and ye shall find a "RAGGED SCHOOL."

To curb the passions, and to mould the will;
To guide the wandering, and bring back the lost;
With Scripture truth the memory's stores to fill;
And seek the soul to save, at any cost:
To heal the youth that haunt our public ways,
Foul as the crowds that throng'd Bethesda's pool;—
This is the effort of our modern days—
This is the glory of the "RAGGED SCHOOL."

The band of labourers, *now*, though scant and small,
To see *the first fruits*, with delight begin;
A time will come, when, in the sight of all,
The glorious *harvest* shall be gathered in:
And thousands then, in heaven's unclouded calm,
Shall bow to Him who doth all nations rule,
Strike the sweet harp, and wave the victor's palm,
And bless the Saviour for the "RAGGED SCHOOL."

Christians of Britain, if ye love your land,
Your land of freedom, by the TRUTH made free,
Give of your substance, that each youthful band
That truth may learn, and God's salvation see;
Cleanse not the "*outside of the cup*,"* alone;
Who does, is but a pharisaic fool;—
But, that its inward brightness may be shown,
Pray for a blessing on the "RAGGED SCHOOL."

J. P.

Dec., 1848.

THE TRUE MOTIVE.

LET that motive urge you which fired evangelists and strengthened martyrs—to which earth owes its most splendid virtues, and to which heaven owes all its earth-born citizens. Let the love of Christ constrain you, and then you can neither live too long, nor work too hard, nor be summoned from the world too soon.—*Rev. James Hamilton.*

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* Matthew xxiii. 25.

Editor's Portfolio.

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY.

We have been favoured with the following important statement from the Secretary of one of the first Ragged Schools that was established in London. We trust the youths, to whom he refers, may find their way back to school, and that, by kindness and perseverance, their teachers may be as successful as many of their fellow-labourers have already been, in rescuing such unhappy outcasts from the ruinous course on which they have entered:—

"Finding it impossible to get the children to attend our school in the forenoon, we determined upon changing the hours to half-past six in the evening. We commenced our new plan on Sunday, November 26th, when we had upwards of 200 children and youths in attendance. Under all circumstances, their behaviour was good during the greater part of the evening. About ten minutes to eight o'clock, however, there was a signal given by some of the boys, and instantly there was a move in all parts of the room, and a rush made to the staircase. The superintendent was amazed at this proceeding; recovering from his surprise, however, he darted across the room, and was just in time to catch the last one ere he reached the door. Twenty-one had already made their exit.

"The boy who was caught struggled hard to get away, and loudly cried, 'Let me go—let me go.' But, holding him fast, the teacher replied, 'When you have told me what this plot means, you shall.' 'I want to go to business,' said the boy. 'Business—why, it's Sunday night.' 'Never mind, you let me go,' continued the lad. The superintendent still held firm. 'Well, I'll tell you the truth, sir; do you see it's eight o'clock, sir.' The teacher looked at the clock, and nodded assent. 'Well, sir, we catches them as they comes out of church and chapel.' A policeman now entered. 'Where,' said he, 'did you get those boys from? They are, every one of them, convicted thieves.' Reader, we present you with the fact. It must do its own work. Perhaps some of these boys, ere long, will be on their passage to a distant land, not sent out as pupils from our school, but as felons. Would we could have checked their wicked course. But yet, who knows what good the hour's instruction they received may do? Perhaps, when thousands of miles away, they may remember the Ragged School, and the class, and the book they read, and He who gave it; and, like the thief on Calvary, with their latest breath, they may cry, 'Lord remember me.'"

J. T. M. W.

EVERY-DAY WRETCHEDNESS.

Do we wonder at the wretchedness obtruding itself amidst the bustling magnificence of our great towns? A slight insight into the mental and moral destitution of the neglected classes would remove our surprise at their defects,

and lead us to wonder rather that, with such associations, so much of a fine humanity yet remains amongst them.

I see now a squalid mother, with four children by her side, whom she loves like a savage. She wears the rags of a widow's weeds; she lives by the compassion of passers-by, who fling her pence to avoid the pain of her presence; she cannot smile, and never had any reason to do so; her heart is strong in the feeling of fatality; she doubts not that her wretchedness is the inevitable appointment of a Power whose name she has never heard but in blasphemy, and with which the idea of love would be the most unlikely association. Her husband died in an hospital, where a medical student gave him a tract which he could not read, and whispered at last, in his dying ear, of Jesus and the resurrection; and in death the man wept, and wondered that such words had never reached his ear before. His parents and his wife's parents were vagabonds and outcasts, and it was never known that any of their generation could read. The creed of the Egyptians under the Pharaohs was a creed of light, compared to the palpable darkness of their minds. That haggard widow can only be a whispering beggar in the metropolis of calculation and commerce. What wonder! Two little girls creep feebly by her side; their faces are livid, and withered, and sad; they will soon die. The baby on her bosom is also wasting away. But the diminutive boy, about nine years old, standing at the corner, begging of those speechless ladies with feathered bonnets, has some vigour in him; he was born when his mother's heart was warmer, and his father was drudging on with some hope in his ignorance. That boy will, if left alone, probably be a thief, and come to the gallows, or be sent to Norfolk Island. He is shrewd, quick, sensitive, and already heroic in his efforts to cheat mankind, whom he supposes to be all against him. How shall that child be improved? He dwells in the midst of uncleanness and cruelty, catching the contagion of sin from the expression of almost every face, and he is in sympathy with polluted humanity in every form. How shall that susceptible young being be transformed in the spirit of his mind, so as to grow god-like, while all the influences about him tend to make and keep him hideous within? *Educate—educate; stamp burning truth upon his soul;* show him that you are in sympathy with heaven; impress the character of Jesus on his mind; let him feel the Saviour's love in yours; let him see how you adore actively, because the Maker of worlds, and of souls, and of bodies, is pledged to redeem us from all evil. Teach him the Lord's Prayer; bid him look abroad upon the universe of light, and give him the key to its glories; give him knowledge, and you will then furnish him with motive for behaving as if he might hope to become an heir of God. That boy may be either a Barabbas or a Barnabas. Under the guardian influence of Christian associations, and the spirit that unites souls in the love of a glorified Master, who was once crucified for them, the incarnated inheritance of evil would be exchanged by that boy for a godly heritage; and, instead of growing up as an Arab amongst men, he would be able to smile like an angel, even if they should stone him, for he would still look into heaven and pray for them.—*Dr. Moore.*

Intelligence.

ST. GILES' RAGGED SCHOOL.

THE second Public Meeting in connexion with these schools was held on Monday evening, Dec. 4th, at the Music Hall, Store Street, Bedford Square; the Hon. and Rev. H. M. Villiers occupying the chair. The room was crowded at an early hour by a respectable audience, who seemed deeply interested throughout the evening.

The Rev. Henry Jones opened the meeting by prayer.

The Chairman then said, there were several Christian friends and ministers who would have been present but for other engagements, amongst whom he had received letters from the Rev. H. Hughes, M.A., the Rev. Wm. Cadman, M.A., the Right Hon. Lord Ashley, who sent a donation of £2, and Lord Denbigh, who sent a donation of one guinea. Mr. Villiers proceeded to express an earnest desire for the success of this school, as he was personally interested in it, being in his own parish; he would be sorry, however, if any present should suppose the remarks they heard made applied only to the Ragged School of St. Giles', (Hear, hear,) and when they called to mind a statement recently made in Parliament, that there were in London no less than 30,000 children, all in a condition to partake of the benefits furnished by Ragged Schools, he thought no one could hesitate to contribute to their support; that these children might not, at the day of judgment, exclaim, "No man cared for our souls." Ragged Schools possessed peculiar claims, whether they were regarded as a philanthropic, a national, or a Christian question. They were a moral police force, and a moral force was always superior to a physical force. These schools were peculiarly suited to the exigencies of the case they were intended to meet, and it was the duty of all to do something in their aid. He concluded by calling on the Secretary to read the Report.

Mr. Williams, the Secretary, then read the Fifth Annual Report, which was of a very cheering and encouraging character. The Committee had much pleasure in speaking of the improved moral tone which prevailed among the scholars. During the past year they had paid more attention to writing and arithmetic than in previous years. The average attendance was about fifty-two; the number of boys who had received instruction was 314. Lord Ashley had recently prevailed on Government to provide with outfits and send out 150 boys to South Australia; and the Committee had peculiar pleasure in stating that sixteen out of St. Giles' Ragged School had been accepted by the Emigration Commissioners as fit candidates. Of these, ten had already sailed for Port Philip, lads of from fourteen to twenty-one years of age. During the past year, £14. 7*s*. 11*d*. had been deposited in the Provident Fund in connexion with this school. The Report detailed many very interesting and encouraging instances of usefulness, which our limits preclude the possibility of giving.

The Rev. Wm. Short moved the adoption of the Report. He said, if we hoped to see this country filling the place which he believed God intended it should fill, as the bulwark of the church, we must see that religion was progressing in the dirty alleys of our overgrown cities. Not only must our zeal be shown, in prayers offered up in an unknown country, and in an unknown tongue, but our own dirty alleys and lanes must be remembered, and in them must we pluck the brands from the burning. He gave some interesting particulars relative to the opening and progress of a school in a very destitute part of his own parish, "Little Ormond Place." He concluded, by exhorting the young people present, first to give themselves to God, and then come forward and assist in this great and important work.

The Rev. E. Pizey seconded the Resolution. He remarked, that the blessings in connexion with Ragged Schools were very comprehensive. In educating a poor child, not only were they blessing that child, but stirring up his energies to become a benefactor of his race. It must be remembered, that the class they sought to benefit were persons not only indifferent to their own salvation and that of others, but were absolute curses in the circles in which they moved,

many of them having been actually convicted of crime. If, then, under the blessing of God, we could bring these outcasts under the influence of God's Spirit, where was the individual who could refuse his prayers and his assistance in rescuing these poor souls from the everlasting misery they had in prospect? We were not to forget the example of Him who came to seek and to save that which was lost. We equally needed salvation; on this point we stood on common ground with those outcasts whose case he was pleading; and this should lead us to sympathize with them. He prayed that the Spirit of God might rest on all those devoted teachers who gave their time to this work, and that there would be such a response to the appeal now made, by all present, that next year they would hear of the school which was required having been erected, and the blessing of God would crown their labour of love with abundant success.

The second Resolution, expressive of thanksgiving to God for blessings vouchsafed on the labours of the Committee and Teachers, was moved by the Rev. R. W. Overbury. He felt much pleasure in moving the Resolution, because of the grateful feelings it breathed. The blessings of God were indeed ever bestowed alike on rich and poor; there was no distinction of rank or wealth with the Most High. He felt assured, if this meeting really were grateful, there would be no lack of contributions for the purposes of the school. We lived not in an age of fruitless speculation, but of useful, productive exertion. We found interest in deliberating plans of usefulness, not as in the time of the schoolmen, splitting hairs in divinity. The question amongst divines of the present day was, How can we most effectually spread the Gospel of God? How shall we meet the case of those living at our own doors in a state of ignorance and vice? He had a Ragged School in his own neighbourhood; it was in a very low locality—Vine Street, near to Liquorpond Street. The conduct of the children in this neighbourhood, at one time, was a general nuisance; now the shopkeepers in the neighbourhood were heard to express their surprise at the change which had taken place in their conduct and deportment. He had pleasure in recording facts as they were in grace, the same as were phenomena in nature. He related the case of the minister of a large church in New York, and who had gained some celebrity as an author—his work on Romanism having gone through twelve editions—Dr. Dowling, who had written to him recently, stating, that he received his first religious impressions in an obscure room, used as a school, in connexion with the church of which he (Mr. Overbury) was the minister.

The Rev. H. Jones seconded the Resolution. He thought Ragged Schools had claims on our sympathy of a peculiar nature; they were intended to benefit the neglected young, both temporally and spiritually. It would be well if the Commissioners of our Sanitary Reforms would support institutions such as this, for if they cleansed all the alleys, and lanes, and courts of the metropolis today, and left the inhabitants morally and religiously destitute, they would be filthy again to-morrow. On the other hand, if they impart religious instruction, inculcating those principles which promote not only godliness but cleanliness, all the dirty parts of the metropolis would be abandoned until they were put in clean condition. He trusted all would do something to further this blessed work.

The Rev. W. Bevan moved the third Resolution, as follows:—"That it is the duty and privilege of all who have it in their power, especially Christians, to care for the temporal and spiritual wants of the offspring of the poor, particularly the class sought to be benefited by Ragged Schools. And this meeting is of opinion, that industrial classes in connexion with such schools are most desirable, and highly calculated to benefit the moral and social condition of the children, and therefore ought to be established and supported." He said, the Resolution announced the necessity for inculcating sound principles, and forming right habits, among the lowest classes of society, even among those who were regarded as almost beyond the reach of hope. It also recognised the principle, that social agencies might be brought to bear upon them. There was no instrument possessing so much power as the Gospel of Christ, bringing at once the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. Why, he would ask, did Britain stand firm, whilst continental nations were tossed to and

fro, whilst institutions the most ancient were overthrown, and thrones, apparently based on the firmest foundations, were trodden in the dust? Why was it, then, he would ask, that Britain stood with all her privileges intact? The solving of the problem was to be found in Britain's Christianity. (Cheers.) It was not because of our excellent institutions, our valiant soldiery, our wise politicians, but because there was constantly a power at work, higher and purer than these, and in this power was our conservation. (Hear, hear.) Such institutions as these were developments of the Christianity of the country; and in precisely such proportion as we carried our efforts downwards into the lowest classes of society, in such proportion did we imitate the example of Christ. These schools snatched their trophies not only from the squalid and debased, but from amongst criminals also—from amongst those abandoned as outcasts; they are made to feel that for them there was hope; that they might be lifted up from their degradation to usefulness and honest industry. Let them be lifted up, and they would become our best coadjutors in rooting out the sources of physical and moral pestilence. It was by enterprise such as this that we furnished the best reply to the objections of the sceptic; for here our differences of opinion, instead of preventing our working harmoniously together, only had the effect of producing organisation and promoting system. One of the chief excellencies of Ragged Schools was, that it asked no questions as to the creed of the Christian engaging in the work. He urged on all the necessity of assisting, in some way, that they might claim as their trophies many heirs of immortality. (Cheers.)

E. H. Fitzherbert, Esq., seconded the Resolution. He observed, that one of the most touching descriptions of Christ's ministry was contained in the sentence, "to the poor the Gospel is preached," and it was especially to the children of the poor, the very poor, they addressed their labour. He called on all who could to join them, and seconded the Resolution, which was passed unanimously.

Mr. Lloyd moved, and Mr. Cronin seconded, a vote of thanks to the Hon. and Rev. Chairman, which was passed unanimously.

Mr. Villiers returned thanks, concluding his remarks with the injunction of our Lord to Peter, "Feed my Lambs."

The Doxology being sung, and the benediction pronounced, the meeting separated.

A collection was made at the door, amounting to £31. 7*s.* 8*d.*

EXETER BUILDINGS' RAGGED SCHOOLS, CHELSEA.

THE First Annual Meeting of these Schools was held at the Cadogan Rooms, Sloane-street, on Tuesday Evening, Dec. 5th, the Right Hon. Lord Ashley in the chair. Seldom have we witnessed a more crowded or more deeply interested audience; many were obliged to go away, unable to gain admittance; and others climbing up outside, listened attentively at the open windows.

The meeting was opened with prayer by the Rev. Mr. Rashdall. The Right Hon. Chairman said it gave him great pleasure to meet such an audience, assembled to celebrate the first anniversary of an institution in that district, for the purpose of imparting moral and religious instruction to the most destitute and forgotten portion of the community. It was only of late years that we had made the discovery of that very large class in the metropolis, and all our large towns—a class peculiar in its habits, its manners, its feelings, in its localities, he might almost say—in its nature. Having been discovered, a few individuals began to feel for them, and it was soon found that as the evil was peculiar, the remedy must be peculiar also; and he gave great credit for ingenuity to those who had devised, and he thanked God for having put it into their hearts to establish Ragged Schools. These schools were just adapted to the class for whom they were intended; they were rendered as attractive as possible; they were unfettered by rules, for the rules applied to other children, brought up under different circumstances, were quite inapplicable here. Many of the children were without parents, and many more who had parents would be better without them. These schools should be looked on merely as preparatory, and the children as in a transition state, and that was one reason why he held to the word *ragged* in connexion with these schools. Their object was not to keep them ragged, but the name designated the class

for whose reception they were intended. He appealed to results, as showing they did not wish to keep these children ragged. These schools were intended for those for whom no living soul cared, to provide them with that wherewith they could not provide themselves. If they wished to check the amount of crime, it must be checked in the bud; and if another ten years were suffered to pass without effecting more than had hitherto been done, the evil would be so fearfully augmented, as to be past struggling with. Much had been done during the last ten or fifteen years; he believed that fifteen years ago we could not have stood firm as we now did amid the general political agitations which had been overturning empires. He called upon all to redouble their prayers and their labours, and God would bless them.

The Secretary now read the Report, which was highly interesting, It detailed something of the history of this school. The court named Exeter Buildings had long been proverbial for all kinds of vice, and many a dark deed had there been planned and executed. It had always swarmed with children, idling about and getting into all kinds of mischief. A Christian lady, about four years ago, who had seen and pitied these poor neglected ones, conceived the idea of establishing a Ragged School; she succeeded, and for four years the school had gradually increased in numbers and efficiency. Twelve months ago, at the suggestion of the Ragged School Union, who gave an annual grant of £12, a committee of ladies and gentlemen was formed for the better carrying out of the original intention, and it had, under their management, considerably increased in efficiency. The number of children admitted into the day school since January, 1847, was, of boys 210, girls 152—total 362. The average attendance last year was 70; this year it had reached 120. In March last, an industrial class for teaching the boys tailoring was opened, and had been carried on with much success. About fourteen children had left for service during the last twelve months, all of whom, with one exception, were doing well. The financial statement showed a balance in favour of the school amounting to £3. 14*s.* 3*d.*

Captain Harcourt moved the adoption of the Report. He detailed the rise and progress of several schools, illustrating that rapid progress frequently followed small beginnings.

The Resolution was seconded, in an eloquent speech, by the Rev. Mr. Robinson, of Christ's Church, Chelsea; and being put to the meeting, was passed unanimously.

The Rev. Dr. Morison moved the next Resolution, to the effect, that the results of this and other schools were encouraging, and demanded our sympathy and support. He observed, that it was very common at meetings like the present for persons to be deeply interested, and feel much sympathy; they applauded the speeches, and by other means testified their interest, but, unhappily, there the matter ended. He hoped it would not be so on that occasion, but that all, as they passed the resolution, would carry their sympathy into practical effect. He had pleasure in moving the Resolution.

In doing this, the reverend gentleman laid before the noble chairman a small bag of silver, amounting to £7. 17*s.*, collected in behalf of the school by a member of his own church, in subscriptions of 2*s.* 6*d.* and 5*s.* each, thus showing how much may be done by individual effort.

The Resolution was seconded by the Rev. Wm. Arthur, of Paris, in a speech of peculiar interest and importance; want of space obliges us to defer its insertion for the present, but we hope to favour our readers with a full report of it in our next number.

The Rev. John Branch moved the next Resolution, to the effect, that it was the duty and privilege of Christians of all denominations to unite in this work, both by a personal effort and pecuniary aid. The Resolution was seconded by the Rev. Mr. Rashdall, and carried unanimously.

The Rev. Mr. Cousins moved, and Mr. Anderson seconded, a vote of thanks to the chairman, which the Right Hon. Lord having acknowledged, the Doxology was sung, and the meeting separated.

The collection amounted to £16.11*s.*4*d.*, besides the bag of silver already noticed, and donations to the amount of £35, towards repairing and enlarging the school-room, for which £100 more is still required.